(ii) A Centrally sponsored scheme of Sustainable Development of Sugarcane Based Cropping System (SUB ACS) is under implementation. The main thrust of the scheme is on the transfer of improved production technology to the farmers through field demonstrations, training of farmers, supply of farm implements, enhancing production of planting materials, efficient use of water, treatment of planting materials etc. The scheme is under implementation in 22 States/Union Territories.

(iii) Concessional loans at an interest rate of 4% per annum are given to sugar factories from Sugar Development Fund (SDF) for modernization of plant and machinery, expansion of crushing capacity, utilization of by-products *viz.* baggasse for co-generation of power and molasses for production of ethanol, up gradation of technology and sugarcane development including better irrigation facilities, improved seed variety, ratoon management, etc.

Rise in prices of pulses and other food items

2320. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) what steps Government has taken, so far, to control steep rise in prices of pulses and other food items of daily use;

(b) whether Government has decided to extend the import of pulses at zero duty till end of March, 2010 and also ban export of all kinds of pulses for one more year;

(c) if so, what steps Government has taken, so far, to maintain a steady supply in the domestic market as well as distribution of imported pulses through the Public Distribution System (PDS); and

(d) whether State run trading firms would be allowed to import 1.5 million tonnes of pulses under a reimbursement scheme?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) The Government has taken a number of steps to control the price rise and to soften the impact of price rise on consumers. The important steps taken are briefly listed in the Statement. [Refer to the Statement appended to the Answer to Unstarred Question No. 2303 Part (c)]

(b) and (c) Yes Sir. Government extended zero duty on import of pulses for another one year, up to 31.3.2010. Government also extended the ban on export of pulses (except kabuli chana) for another year, up to 31.3.2010. Government has permitted 4 PSUs *viz.* PEC, STC, MMTC, NAFED to import 1.5 million tonnes of pulses under the 15% reimbursement scheme. In addition, the PSUs along with NCCF are also permitted to supply imported pulses to State Governments for distribution through the PDS. The scheme for distribution of imported pulses at subsidised rates by the State Governments through the PDS which was conceived as a one time measure has been extended up to 30.09.2009.

(d) Yes Sir.